

Greek Dancing for Exercise

It May Be Done With the Help of a Phonograph and Combines Pleasure and Physical Culture.

"Men are so unimaginative! My husband has all sorts of appliances for getting strong quick. He gets up in the morning and pulls at straps, twirls objects and kicks furiously at nothing. Such antics you never saw. Doubtless they have some underlying advantage or he wouldn't perform them, for he is a practical man. But they are so ridiculous I always think of Don Quixote fighting the windmill when I see him threatening the air and striking absurd attitudes so seriously."

She was getting into her own costume for a bout. It must be admitted that the costume was almost the least that would be worthy the name. It consisted of two strips of pink cheesecloth hung from the shoulders and twice girt about her form. The suggestion was Greek, as revealed on vases and frescoes, if one was not too exacting.

"Now, when I get up and feel headachy or as if my doll was stuffed with sawdust I too have my exercise. But, oh, the difference! I start the 'Marche Militaire' on my patient phonograph, and the strains are so inspiring that I go through my paces so buoyantly that my husband stops his seesawing to enjoy my dance."

"Now the difference lies in this," she

didn't know I had. At first they made me painfully conscious of their existence. Now they're getting quite tamed."

"Let me see them in action."

"All right."

She put Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" on the phonograph and darted forward, a series of leaps, of sudden swoopings, bended body, lightly turned head strung along seemingly some mental thread until the final pose of perfect rest.

"Now will you tell me how you remember when each swoop and caper comes in on the dot?"

"Shall I tell you the story? This is it. 'I point first to an imaginary tree, run lightly to it, stretch up and pull down a bough, take it in my arms, then gayly throw it aside. This I do three times in different corners of the room.'

"Suddenly I am attracted by the upspringing grass and trip lightly over it. Then I see flowers in the grass, sit down and gather an imaginary bouquet, then toss it over my head. This I do three times, and perhaps you may think it easy to sit down with one leg thrust forward, then break your pose gracefully in getting up."

"My mood changes. I hear a bird



Photo by Speda Studio.

THE BACCHANAL DANCE.

taught standing still, and now we have woven them into a dance. Put on the slow waltz."

"The pupil began a series of rhythmic poses of the arms and head while walking slowly."

"This is a dance of the seasons. First is the nesting of birds. Observe the suggestiveness of the pose. There, that is enough. Put on the love song from Samson and Delilah, and we will have the sowing of the seed."

"You will notice now the lower and larger movement of the arm. We have three zones for gesture. The first is above the breast, the second between the breast and knee, the third below the knee. The gestures for sowing the seed are in the middle zone."

Summer having arrived the phonograph sang out "Valse Bleue," and the dancer was ostensibly chasing butterflies to the lively strains.

"These exercises are to give that rippling movement of the arm and hand which always excites admiration. You observe there is no footwork in this. Beyond throwing the body on one foot or the other, which are simple exercises in balancing. Now for the 'Liberation' of Liezt and we will gather in the sheaves."

"This exercise," said the dancer, "has taken off thirty pounds of my weight and perceptibly reduced my waist. These swoops from the waist down are more efficacious than dieting for reducing the waist."

"If you are rested, let us have the 'Marche Militaire' for your footwork. The gestures here are very simple," Miss Walters explained. "The right hand is held at salute, varied by both hands simulating the playing of a fife. Now, march. High knees, remember."

High knees, one should say! With the prettiest semblance of a quick march the knees alternately rose as if to salute the nose. The head was carried boyishly,

in all the other dances it is held with pointed toe.

"The 'Pipes of Pan' has no story. The poses are taken from Greek vases and friezes, with the sounding of cymbals, the clapping of hands and piping, whistles foot gesture consists of skipping but with high knee, and all worked up joyously in mazurka time."

This proved to be one of the prettiest of the quick dances, and in it one learned a lot about the action which must accompany dancing—the lines of opposition, keeping the wrist leading in all gestures, the melting of poses without breaking them violently, the chin following the wrist, the harmonic hand to give the illusion of length and slimmness, the work of the eye in carrying out the story of the dance, the necessity of presence of mind in dancing, inasmuch as if in some twirling and turning one should fall, the fall must be turned into a pose, and the spectator deceived into believing that was just what was intended."

"Rapid dancing has the air of being more difficult than the slow," said Miss Walters. "In fact, it is much easier. Any break in changing from pose to pose is more easily seen in a slow dance. A slow dance requires more perfect control of the body. If you are rested, let us have the 'Glock Gavotte,' which will illustrate what I mean. In this gavotte you dance against time, carrying the hands over the head as if bearing an urn."

The pose proved to be very lovely, the slow, graceful footwork ending in pirouettes.

"Well," said the pupil, "there may be people who can do those pirouettes without getting dizzy, but I can't. I am ready to fall over."

"In that case you must take your medicine more frequently; pirouettes and more pirouettes. You have no business to get dizzy. We'll see to that. Now the 'Valse Minuet,' which is still lower,



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Photo by Speda Studio.

THE SPRING SONG.



Photo by Speda Studio.

THE BACCHANAL DANCE.

continued as she tossed off a boot, "that while I am unlimbering my muscles and starting my blood gayly through my veins my heart and my mind are also uplifted with the rhythm of music and pose."

"Physical culture with modern improvements, eh?"

"Physical culture isn't in it with Greek dancing, either for bodily profit or for pleasure. Women do not want exaggerated muscles. They want responsive muscles, but always with grace."

"My dancing calls forth muscles I

singing and bend forward to listen with one hand to my ear and my eye following its flight. Then I hear a bird in another direction and follow it. Three times these movements are repeated. The pose is now entirely different, the arms outspread as if in flight."

"I am by this time fairly enchanted with the spring and give myself up to the abandon of the moment, until my mood is exhausted and I calm down with the music into final repose."

"Have all the dances a memory story?"

"Not all, but here is another."

The faithful phonograph set up "The Blue Danube," and the dancer began her capering, explaining breathlessly: "Now I am tossing the water over my head. The movement changes and I am imitating the undulations of the waves. Look at me now. I am leaping through the waves. This is the fourth movement and I am darting through the waves and throwing the water over my head. There, that is as far as I have gone."

At this juncture the teacher, Miss Grace Walters, entered and sitting down took off her shoes and stockings.

LEARNING TO READ NOWADAYS.

The Old Fashioned Cat-Cat Method No Longer in Use.

"How is a little child taught to read in these days?" is a question that troubles many parents.

"The man who was to go to school until he was old enough to go to work remembers how he was taught to read and," according to a writer in *Teacher and Home*, "thinks he knows what a dreary time his child is having."

"He sends his small son to school only to discover that the child is expected to read before he can spell 'cat.' This father would like to know how a child can read without knowing how to spell a word."

"The great problem in teaching reading to beginners is to form an unerring, almost automatic connection between speech, ear language and eye language. We recognize that we must reach the child's mind through his senses by the way of his instincts, and that having reached his mind we must impress by means of drill those arbitrary signs which represent thoughts."

"These principles have led to the use of stories, rhymes, poems, dramatization and other devices which parents do not always understand and therefore condemn as nonsense, even sometimes putting them among the fads and frills. There is no nonsense about them, but the soundest common sense."

"When I want you to know my friend Jones do I show you a derby hat, a purple necktie and a gray overcoat, and expect you to know Jones when you see him and to be able to call him by name? Yet this

is what children are expected to do when they are taught in the 'good old way,' beginning with the alphabet and then spelling their words as first steps in reading."

"Under the old plan children were taught to call 'c' by the name 'see,' 'a' by the name 'ay,' and 't' by the name 'tee'; then they were expected to put 'see, ay, tee' together and say the word 'cat.' No wonder reading was such a drag; the marvel is that they ever learned to read."

"What I really do about Jones to make him known to you is to tell you a little tale about him. I tell you that Jones lives in a three room apartment and keeps four dogs; then along comes Jones with his four dogs and I introduce him to you. What happens? Your mind is ready for Jones, you look at him with interest, and the next time you see him, whether the dogs are with him or not, you know him. Later on you may notice that he always appears in a derby hat, purple necktie and gray overcoat, but the main fact is that you know him again whenever you see him."

"Now it is upon this common, ordinary, everyday method that we teach beginners to read. We tell a little story to rouse the child's interest. This story has some central thought contained in the words the child will be expected to read. We repeat the story till he is assured that every little he knows it sufficiently well to repeat the central thought with its exact words."

"Now we put that thought on the blackboard and tell the children we are going to let them read. Here again we are satisfying the children's instincts, for little ones love to imitate their elders, and in these days of much reading every child tries to read before he goes to school."

"Now the teacher asks a question that will be answered in the words on the blackboard, such as, 'Who was Bab?' 'The child answers, 'Bab was a brown baby.'"

"Then the teacher asks the same question again, and as the child answers she points to the words. Now several children come up and point to the words as they say 'Bab was a brown baby.'"

"By this time many children can distinguish one word from another and they will be able to recognize 'baby,' 'brown,' or any of the words wherever they see them. Next these words are combined into new sentences. If a child hesitates over a word he is sent back to the key and studies it until he is able to get the word he could not remember. The next sentence is taught in the same way, and so on."

FOLDING SLIPPERS.

So Made to Occupy Little Space for the Convenience of Travelers.

Ordinary slippers do not take up such an enormous amount of space, and still many a man after he has got his bag packed has found it hard work to wedge in a pair. For travelers' use there are now made folding slippers which take up far less room.

Folding slippers of one sort are made of putskin lined with a light russet color. They are heelless, with no stiffening in the counter and with a flange side. They are so crossed that when not worn they fold readily into the smallest possible compass flat. Folded they are slipped into a flat pigskin case.

The folding slippers of putskin are lined with silk. They are comfortable, even luxurious, to wear. They cost \$3.75 a pair. Other folding slippers are made of calfskin, a lighter leather, that permits of folding the slippers into an even smaller space. These slippers of calfskin are made black and also in colors, and like those of pigskin they are silk lined. The calfskin folders cost \$2.50 a pair.



Photo by Speda Studio.

THE BACCHANAL DANCE.

"I can hold up my gown and dance," she said, "but I cannot dance in shoes and stockings. Come, begin now. Go through your feather movements."

"Feather?"

"The name for a series of movements to make the arms light and graceful. The important thing for women in physical culture is to learn to bring the muscles into play gracefully."

"We begin with a series of devitalizing exercises in order to render each part of the body independent and resourceful. The feather movements for the arm are

A WEIRD PILGRIMAGE.

Cure Sought by Sleeping One Night Beside a Certain Plant.

"The weirdest pilgrimage on earth" is the phrase in which one writer describes the ceremony which takes place once a year, on the night of the Ascension, at a place in Rumania.

"Situated to the northeast of the town of Targu-Giu, in the western division of Rumania, is a great arid plain, and on it," according to this writer in the *Wide World*, "grows a wonderful plant, termed in the vernacular *Frasnel* (the heath), or in Latin, *Dictamnus albus* or *Dictamnus* pers."

"The peasants firmly believe that a night—this one night of the year—spent among the plants will cure all ills, and they flock to the place by thousands. It was to see this pilgrimage without a parallel that we visited the place on the eve of the Ascension."

"On reaching the edge of the plain we found many hundreds of carts, and every moment the crowd is increased by newcomers. In the distance can be seen groups occupying the plain, and their effort are searching for the plant. Those in charge of the carts are engaged on their evening meal of bread, or marmalade (marmalade), with onions, olives or garlic."

"All are shivering with cold, for no fire must be lighted there to-night. On every other occasion the opportunity of an outdoor picnic is an excuse for much wine drinking, but to-day the great wooden wine bottle, the *ploska*, is strangely absent. All one sees are the graceful earthenware water jars, from which one drinks from an opening in the handle."

"People from all parts of western Rumania visit this place of miraculous cures. Arrived at the ground where the plant is mostly to be found, each party hunts out a root. At dusk a clean white

sheet is spread near it and the sick person, also in white, takes his place upon it. Three holy candles are then placed about the plant, as also a bowl of water."

"Then the patient, by proxy, for he must not so much as touch the plant, lies down until he gets up the following morning, says the prayers used on this occasion. These are chanted by old women known as *matronas*, or aunts, and should be repeated fifteen times in order to effect a cure. These aunts act in turn for different persons, receiving from each a loaf of bread and whatever else the sick person can afford to give."

"The pilgrim sleeps all night with his head close to the stalks of the plant, or evergreen leaves, or blades of grass. In the morning, immediately after sunrise, the bowl must be examined, for if the plant happens to contain leaves or flowers of the plant, evergreen leaves or blades of grass, then the augury is good and the patient will eventually recover."

"If, however, it contains dead leaves, bits of earth, sand, or the like, then the portent is death, and that soon. So important is the belief in the augury that when it is unfavorable in the case of a child the peasant parents very often give the little one no further attention, regarding it as doomed anyway."

"Those to whom the bowl oracle is favorable must pluck their plant and on the way home cast it into running water. That directs the course of the malady away from them. These fortunate ones who receive good signs generally come a second and a third year."

"The Rumanian peasant goes to bed early, and so before it is fairly dark the plain is left to the sick pilgrims. When we were there comparatively few spectators stayed to see the night vigil through. The sick themselves, except for the poor wretches whose sufferings made their candles twinkling beside them, and their heads toward the guardian plants they looked like phantoms in their white garments."

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You see it is founded on the courtesy, with long, slow movements of the arms, and this involves holding the pose in order to get back into the rhythm without any apparent break in line."

"At this moment," said the pupil, sinking back into the depths of an easy chair while getting into a kimono, "I feel as if every part of my body was enjoying an independent existence, but would I wished it take a subordinate position for the common good."

"I am satisfied," said the teacher. "That is exercise as it should be."

"The aunts' moved slowly among them, lighting a taper blown out by the wind, or sitting chanting the prayers in the hideous nasal manner of the Greek church. Where there was a child one or other of its relatives sat by it; all others had returned to their carts to sleep in or under them."

"As the sun rose behind the blue mountains, flooding the valleys and turning the white of the pilgrims' trappings to gold, they were all roused from their slumber, for just after sunrise not the least strange part of this ceremony has to be performed. This is the washing of the faces and breasts of the 'patients,' all of them looking toward the holy *matronas*. The water from the bowl is used for this operation, but first of all every one looks eagerly into it to read his or her fate."

"There are looks of happiness, laughter and chatter where the night has brought happy tokens; resignation where nothing is to be found. Patience; we must come again next year, they say. But when all is said is the verdict there is despair depicted on every countenance, and the Oriental wail of woe is to be heard in more than one direction."

"An hour later all of them had left. The last carts could be heard rattling on the road, and all that remained of this strange sort of pilgrimages were the hundreds of scraps of broken bowls, intentionally smashed when the pilgrims left. Why they are broken nobody knows."

"That the flower plays such an important part is because it actually has certain medicinal values, a potion made by boiling the roots being said to be efficacious against fever and other ailments. The blossoms contain a very volatile oil, which will light on putting a match to the flower, on very hot summer evenings it forms a sort of halo round the plant, without injuring it in any way, and it is no doubt on account of this uncanny property that the plant has been credited with such miraculous attributes."